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UNCLAS YEREVAN 000108

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR G/TIP, DRL AND EUR/CACEN

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TAGS: PGOV PREL KCRM AM KTIP

SUBJECT: SIX CASES OF TRAFFICKING PROSECUTED AS
PIMPING

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accordingly.

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) The Prosecutor General's (PG) Office provided detailed information on six criminal cases prosecuted in 2004 under Article 262 of the Armenian Criminal Code on the Organization of Prostitution (i.e., pimping). The defendants of all the cases were either recruiters, mediators, or pimps who sent women for prostitution to the United Arab Emirates (UAE); moreover, most of the defendants were cited in more than one case. Aristakes Yeremyan, the investigator from the PG's Office, who is the main person to deal with the pimping cases, categorically denied that these cases could be considered trafficking with the explanation that in all those cases women knew in advance that they would work as prostitutes before they left for Dubai. While we are pleased that the authorities aggressively pursued investigation and prosecution in these cases, we remain frustrated by their reluctance to applying the new trafficking statute. End Summary.

NUMBERS AND BACKGROUNDS OF THE TRAFFICKERS

¶2. (SBU) The six cases together involved thirteen recruiters in Armenia and ten pimps in Dubai. The cases also mentioned the names of at least 80 women, who were sent to the UAE for prostitution, some of whom are still there. Some of these women were involved in the investigation of the cases as witnesses. Most of the pimps and recruiters are women whose age ranges from early 30s to late 40s, half of them have previous convictions (generally on charges of pimping), most of them are unemployed with modest educations and come from the regions of Armenia, a few of them worked as prostitutes before becoming pimps or recruiters.

TRANSPORTATION ROUTE

¶3. (SBU) The transportation route was the same for all the cases. The recruiters first sent the women to Moscow, where they stayed for several days in rented apartments with a group of Armenian men who obtained false documents for them.

THE COURT CONVICTIONS

¶4. (SBU) The court has already made decisions on four of those cases; the court hearings on the remaining two are still in progress. Three recruiters, one pimp and two mediators (who worked in Moscow) received prison sentences ranging from six to eighteen months. One pimp and two recruiters paid fines ranging from USD 400 to 800.

WHY PROSECUTORS DON'T APPLY THE TRAFFICKING ARTICLE

¶5. (SBU) The Armenian public, the press, and the Prosecutor General's office still generally hold the opinion that women who go abroad, knowing in advance that they will work as prostitutes, are not victims of trafficking. They regard the entire recruitment and transportation process merely as organized prostitution and not trafficking. According to Armenian legislation, however, and in accordance with international norms, it does not matter whether the women knew that they would work as prostitutes or not. The GOAM, and in particular the Prosecutor's office,

needs to move beyond this attitude in order to successfully criminalize and combat trafficking in persons.

EVANS